United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea CLCS/52

Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

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Statement by the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission

1. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf held its eighteenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 21 August to 15 September 2006, pursuant to the decision taken at its sixteenth session (CLCS/48, para. 64) and paragraph 34 of General Assembly resolution 60/30. The plenary part of the session was held on 21 and 22 August, the second plenary part was held from 6 to 8 September 2006, while the periods from 23 August to 5 September and 11 to 15 September were used for the technical examination of submissions at the Geographic Information System (GIS) laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs.

2. The following 19 members of the Commission attended the session: Alexandre Tagore Medeiros de Albuquerque, Osvaldo Pedro Astiz, Lawrence Folajimi Awosika, Harald Brekke, Galo Carrera Hurtado, Peter F. Croker, Indurlall Fagoonee, Noel Newton St. Claver Francis, Mihai Silviu German, Abu Bakar Jaafar, Mladen Juračić, Yuri Borisovitch Kazmin, Wenzheng Lu, Yong-Ahn Park, Fernando Manuel Maia Pimentel, Philip Alexander Symonds, Kensaku Tamaki, Naresh Kumar Thakur and Yao Ubuènalè Woeledji.

3. Hilal Mohamed Sultan Al-Azri and Samuel Sona Betah did not attend the session.

4. The Commission had before it the following documents and communications:

(a) Provisional agenda (CLCS/L.21);

(b) Statement by the Chairman of the Commission on the progress of work at its seventeenth session (CLCS/50);

(c) Letter dated 19 May 2006 from the Chairman of the Commission addressed to the President of the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties (SPLOS/140);

(d) Decision on issues related to the proposals by the Commission (SPLOS/144);

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(e) Report of the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (SPLOS/148);

(f) Submission of Brazil dated 17 May 2004 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and addressed through the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Commission; and addendum to the executive summary of the submission, including all charts and coordinates contained therein, transmitted to the Commission through the Secretary-General on 1 March 2006;

(g) Submission of Australia dated 15 November 2004 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(h) Submission of Ireland dated 25 May 2005 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(i) Submission of New Zealand dated 19 April 2006 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(j) Joint submission of France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, dated 19 May 2006, made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission.

Item 1
Opening of the eighteenth session by the Chairman of the Commission

5. The session was opened by Peter F. Croker, Chairman of the Commission.

Item 2
Adoption of the agenda

6. The Chairman proposed the provisional agenda (CLCS/L.21) for consideration by the Commission. The provisional agenda was adopted without amendment (CLCS/51).

Item 3
Organization of work

7. The Chairman outlined the programme of work and the schedule for the Commission's deliberations on the various items of the agenda. The Commission agreed on the programme of work as proposed.

Item 4
Consideration of the submission made by Brazil to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work prior to and during the eighteenth session

8. During the first plenary period, Mr. Carrera, Chairman of the Subcommission established to examine the submission by Brazil, reported on the work done by the Subcommission during the period following the seventeenth session of the Commission. He recalled that the delegation of Brazil had made a commitment to provide responses to issues raised by the Subcommission (see CLCS/50, paras. 14 and 15) no later than 31 July 2006, as well as to provide new seismic and bathymetric data. He stated that such information had been provided to the Subcommission on 26 July 2006 and that the members continued their work, which included the analysis of the additional information, in the intersessional period prior to the eighteenth session. He also informed the Commission that Brazil had requested further meetings with the Subcommission during the first part of the eighteenth session.

9. During the second plenary period, reporting on the work of the Subcommission during the period from 23 August to 5 September 2006, the Chairman stated that the Subcommission had undertaken evaluation of the intersessional work and continued its consideration of the submission and the additional information.

10. In response to the request by the delegation of Brazil, which was led by Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, as Head of Delegation, and which included five other members from the Permanent Mission as well as members from the various national agencies and institutions involved in the submission, three meetings between the Subcommission and the Brazilian delegation were held on 24, 25 and 29 August 2006. During the meetings, the delegation made several presentations and provided further clarifications concerning the additional information transmitted by Brazil in July 2006 regarding its submission. At the meeting between the Subcommission and the Brazilian delegation, which took place on 29 August 2006, Admiral Paulo Cesar Dias Lima, former Alternate Head of the Brazilian delegation, introduced the new Director of Hydrography and Navigation of the Brazilian navy, Admiral Edison Lawrence Mariath Dantas, to the Subcommission.

11. The Subcommission then continued its work and proceeded to draft the recommendations. Work on the recommendations will continue after the conclusion of the eighteenth session with a view to their finalization in time for their consideration during the plenary part of the nineteenth session. It is anticipated therefore that the Subcommission will meet for one week prior to that plenary part, namely from 19 to 23 March 2007.

Item 5
Consideration of the submission made by Australia to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work prior to and during the eighteenth session

12. Mr. Brekke, the Chairman of the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by Australia, reported on the work carried out during the intersessional period. During the seventeenth session of the Commission held in April 2006, the Subcommission presented its preliminary views for eight of the nine Australian regions under consideration by the Subcommission. In the intersessional period, the Subcommission proceeded to work on the ninth region, the Kerguelen Plateau region, and also received responses from the Australian delegation regarding the presentations given at the seventeenth session. During the eighteenth session, the Subcommission presented in writing its preliminary considerations of the ninth region to the Australian delegation. The Subcommission and the delegation held three meetings in which considerations and responses were presented. The Subcommission will next meet for two weeks, from 5 to 16 March 2007, in the GIS laboratory at the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in New York, with a view to finalizing the recommendations to be submitted to the Commission at the plenary of the nineteenth session. During the intersessional period, the Subcommission will proceed to consider outstanding matters and to make draft recommendations for all nine regions in preparation for the two-week working session in March 2007.

13. The Commission also took note of a letter from the Head of the Australian delegation concerning matters related to the scheduling of the consideration of the submission and prepared a response to that letter.

Item 6
Consideration of the submission made by Ireland to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work prior to and during the eighteenth session

14. Yong-Ahn Park, Vice-Chairman, chaired the meetings of the Commission during the consideration of the item. During the first plenary period, Mr. Jaafar, the Chairman of the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by Ireland, reported on the work carried out during the intersessional period and on the plan of work for the eighteenth session.

15. On 7 September 2006, at the plenary meeting of the Commission, the Chairman, on behalf of the Subcommission established to examine the partial submission of Ireland, made a presentation introducing the recommendations of the Commission in regard to the partial submission made by Ireland on 25 May 2005 on

the proposed outer limit of its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the area abutting the Porcupine Abyssal Plain, prepared by the Subcommission.

16. The Chairman of the Subcommission expressed his gratitude to the members of the Subcommission, their additional scientific expert Mr. Pimentel, as well as to the staff of the Secretariat for their respective technical and other excellent support to the Subcommission in discharging its functions.

17. The presentation by the Chairman of the Subcommission was followed by a question-and-answer session, during which the Chairman and the members of the Subcommission provided clarifications on certain aspects of the recommendations. The Commission then decided to defer further consideration of the recommendations to the nineteenth session in order to allow all members of the Commission to study both the submission and the analysis made by the Subcommission in more detail. It was also agreed that all the supporting material would be available to all members of the Commission during the intersessional period through the established and secure means of communication.

Item 7
Consideration of the submission made by New Zealand to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

18. The presentation on the submission of New Zealand was made on 21 August 2006, during the first part of the plenary, by Gerard van Bohemen, International Legal Adviser and Director of the Legal Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

19. In addition to elaborating on substantive points of the submission, he indicated that no current members of the Commission had assisted in the preparation of the submission. Following the presentation, members of the delegation of New Zealand responded to questions posed by the members of the Commission. The Commission then continued the meeting in private.

20. The Commission addressed the modalities for the consideration of the submission. It decided that, as provided for in article 5 of annex II to the Convention and in rule 42 of the rules of procedure of the Commission (CLCS/40), the submission of New Zealand would be addressed through the establishment of a subcommission.

21. The Commission then proceeded to establish a subcommission to examine the submission of New Zealand, composed of the following members: Alexandre Tagore Medeiros de Albuquerque, Harald Brekke, Peter F. Croker, Fernando Manuel Maia Pimentel, Kensaku Tamaki, Naresh Kumar Thakur and Yao Ubuènalè Woeledji.

22. The Commission requested the Subcommission thus established to meet with a view to organizing its work, electing its officers and providing, on the basis of a preliminary examination of the submission, a time estimate for its work.

23. At a resumed plenary session of the Commission, following the initial meeting of the Subcommission, Mr. Brekke informed the Commission that the Subcommission had elected him as Chairman and Mr. Albuquerque and Mr. Tamaki as Vice-Chairmen.

24. During the second plenary period, the Chairman of the Subcommission informed the Commission that the Subcommission had proceeded with its preliminary examination of the submission and the data accompanying it, and that it had met twice with the delegation of New Zealand to ask questions and receive further clarifications. On the basis of that examination, the Chairman reported that the Subcommission would continue the consideration of the submission after the eighteenth session and had therefore decided to resume its meetings from 13 to 17 November 2006.

25. The Commission took note of two letters from the Head of the delegation of New Zealand — one dealing with issues relating to the confidentiality of material in the submission, the other concerning matters related to the scheduling of the consideration of the submission — and prepared a response to the second letter.

Item 8
Consideration of the joint submission made by France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

26. Noel Newton St. Claver Francis, Vice-Chairman, chaired the meetings of the Commission during the consideration of the item. On 22 August 2006, during the first plenary period, the four coastal States made a presentation on the submission to the Commission. The representative of France, Elie Jarmache, Director of International Relations and Cooperation and Secretary General of Oceans, was the first to speak, followed by the representative of Ireland, Lisa Walshe, Law of the Sea Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs; the representative of Spain, D. Sergio Carranza Forster, Area Chief in the Ministry of External Affairs and Cooperation; and the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Lindsay Parson, of the National Oceanography Centre. In addition to those representatives, the delegations of the four coastal States also included a number of scientific, technical and legal advisers.

27. During the presentation, the Commission was informed that Peter F. Croker, member of the Commission, had assisted in the preparation of the submission. The Commission was also informed that, in accordance with paragraph 2 (a) of annex I to the rules of procedure of the Commission, the area of continental shelf covered by the joint partial submission was not subject to any dispute between the four States making the submission and any other State. The four delegations noted that there were no notes verbales from any other States in relation to the submission to which the Secretary-General had given publicity, and that the four States that had made the submission were not aware of any such note being issued by any other State.

28. Following the presentation, members of the delegations of the four States responded to questions asked by the members of the Commission. The Commission then continued the meeting in private.

29. The Commission addressed the modalities for the consideration of the submission. It decided that, as provided for in article 5 of annex II to the Convention and in rule 42 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the

submission of the four coastal States would be addressed through the establishment of a subcommission.

30. The Commission then proceeded to establish a subcommission to examine the submission of the four coastal States, composed of the following members: Lawrence Folajimi Awosika, Noel Newton St. Claver Francis, Mihai Silviu German, Abu Bakar Jaafar, Yuri Borisovitch Kazmin, Wenzheng Lu and Philip Alexander Symonds.

31. The Commission requested the Subcommission to meet with a view to organizing its work, electing its officers and providing, on the basis of a preliminary examination of the submission, a time estimate for its work.

32. At a resumed plenary session of the Commission, following the initial meeting of the Subcommission, Mr. Jaafar informed the Commission that the Subcommission had elected him as Chairman and Mr. Francis and Mr. Symonds as Vice-Chairmen.

33. The Chairman of the Subcommission informed the Commission that the Subcommission had proceeded with its preliminary examination of the submission and the data accompanying it, and that it had met three times with the delegations of the four coastal States to raise questions and receive further clarifications. During those meetings, the Subcommission was also informed that no part of the submission or its supporting data was classified as confidential within the terms of annex II to the rules of procedure of the Commission.

34. On the basis of that examination, the Chairman reported that the Subcommission would require more time after the eighteenth session and had therefore decided to hold a resumed eighteenth session from 22 January to 2 February 2007.

Item 9
Report of the Chairman of the Commission on the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties

35. The Chairman informed the members of the Commission on the proceedings of the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties related to the work of the Commission and the proposal presented by the Commission to the Meeting. He recalled that this proposal was contained in the annex of the letter dated 19 May 2006 from the Chairman of the Commission addressed to the President of the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties (SPLOS/140). He also drew the attention of the members of the Commission to the decision on issues related to the proposals by the Commission (SPLOS/144) and to paragraphs 65 to 82 of the report of the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties, which dealt with information on the activities of the Commission (SPLOS/148).

36. The Commission took note of the information and also of operative paragraph 4 of the above-mentioned decision, in which the Meeting of States Parties called upon the Commission to further consider, in consultation with the Secretariat, possible ways of improving its working methods in order to ensure the timely and efficient performance of its functions, and invited the Chairman of the Commission to inform the next Meeting of States Parties on measures taken in that respect.

37. The Commission decided to deliberate on the matter, with reference, inter alia, to paragraph 71 of the report of the sixteenth Meeting of States Parties, containing a list of suggested options, other than financing the Commission from the regular budget of the United Nations, that the Meeting suggested as worth exploring. The members of the Commission noted that a number of those options had already been discussed within the Commission, and that some of them had been implemented, for example, the use of advanced secure means of communication for intersessional work. It was pointed out, however, that the most productive interaction and work took place during the sessions of the Commission and in the meetings of the subcommissions. In the light of that fact, the Commission then focused its attention on options that were related to the length and frequency of sessions and meetings, scheduling/queuing of the consideration of submissions and the possibility of setting time limits for the consideration of individual submissions.

38. Considering the difficulties experienced in handling five submissions simultaneously during the eighteenth session, the Commission, following an extensive discussion, adopted by consensus the following decision:

> In view of the increasing number of submissions and in order to organize its work in the most efficient way, the Commission decided that the following rules will apply to the submissions received after the end of the eighteenth session of the Commission:
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> 1. Only three subcommissions shall function simultaneously while considering submissions.
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> 2. The submissions shall be queued in the order they are received.
>
> 3. The submission next in line shall be taken for consideration by a subcommission only after one of the three working subcommissions presents its recommendations to the Commission.

39. It was agreed that the above decision represented a temporary and partial measure, and was subject to review if circumstances, including the availability of additional funding and related resources in order to increase the length and frequency of sessions, so warranted. The decision and associated matters, such as the possibility of setting time limits with respect to consideration of submissions, will be included in the provisional agenda of the nineteenth session.

Measures to increase the efficiency of the work of the Commission

40. A group of members of the Commission then proposed a series of measures aimed at increasing the efficiency of the work of the Commission. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Commission would adopt the following practice, which would also be reflected in its rules of procedure:

> At the stage of the examination and consideration of a submission by the subcommission:
>
> 1. The full content of the submission of any State is in principle available at any time for examination by all members of the Commission. Practical ways to view the material should be agreed with the secretariat.
>
> 2. The written records of the internal proceedings of a subcommission are not confidential vis-à-vis the other Commission members.

3. The written communications between a subcommission and the coastal State shall be copied to all members of the Commission.

4. All members of the Commission may freely discuss between them any matters related to any submission, notwithstanding the fact that it is the prerogative and responsibility of the subcommission, through private deliberations, to carry out the examination of a submission on behalf of the Commission and to prepare the final recommendations for consideration by the Commission.

5. The meetings of the subcommission shall take place in private in accordance with paragraph 4.2 of annex II of the rules of procedure. No records of the oral deliberations in the subcommission meetings may be disclosed to anyone outside the subcommission.

41. In the light of the foregoing, the Commission also decided to amend section VI of annex III to its rules of procedure as follows:

After the subcommission presents its recommendations to the Commission, and before the Commission considers and adopts the recommendations, the coastal State may give a presentation on any matter related to its submission to the plenary of the Commission, if it so chooses. For that presentation, the coastal State may be allowed up to half a day. The coastal State and the Commission shall not engage in discussion on the submission or its recommendations at that meeting. After the presentation made by the coastal State, the Commission shall proceed to consider the recommendations in private.

Item 10
Report of the Chairman of the Editorial Committee

42. The Commission decided to defer the consideration of this item to the nineteenth session and invited the Editorial Committee to elect two Vice-Chairpersons at the nineteenth session.

Item 11
Report of the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee

43. The Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee, Mr. Symonds, stated that the Committee had not received any requests for scientific and technical advice.

44. The Commission once again wished to draw attention to the fact that, even though many States were involved in the process of preparation of a submission to the Commission, no request for scientific and technical advice had been received by the Committee from any State. The Commission renewed its willingness to assist States in that regard and encouraged them to make an official request for such assistance, if needed.

Item 12
Report of the Chairman of the Training Committee

45. The Chairman of the Training Committee, Mr. Brekke, reported that during the eighteenth session the Committee had not held any meetings. He also informed the Commission about the participation of members of the Commission in the training course organized by the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in Buenos Aires.

46. During the discussion of the item, the Director of the Division was invited to inform the Commission on the activities carried out by the Division with regard to training courses for delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles and for preparation of submissions to the Commission and the training manual. The Director updated the Commission on the fourth training course, which had been organized by the Division in collaboration with the Government of Argentina and with the support, among others, of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

47. The course was held in Buenos Aires from 8 to 12 May 2006. A total of 37 technical and administrative staff from 11 Caribbean and Latin American countries with potential for extended continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles (Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guyana, Mexico, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay) took part in the course. The Director expressed his appreciation for the contributions made to the course by Karl Hinz (former member of the Commission), Mr. Astiz, Mr. Brekke, Mr. Carrera and Mr. Francis (current members of the Commission), as well as the staff members of the Division who had delivered the various modules of the course. He also expressed his gratitude to the Government of Argentina for the excellent logistical support provided through the National Commission on the Outer Limits of the Continental Shelf in the organization and delivery of the course. The Director pointed out that it was the first course to be held in both English and Spanish.

48. In closing his remarks on the course, the Director noted that it completed the first round of training courses organized by the Division to train personnel of developing countries with regard to the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles. He also noted that the courses had been received very positively by the participating countries and had contributed to raising the awareness about the issue of delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf within their respective Governments. Since the courses, many developing countries had expedited their preparation of a submission to the Commission in order to meet the deadline provided for by the Convention. The Director indicated that the Division intended to organize further training activities in the regions, subregions or countries where there was a manifest need for additional technical assistance. In that connection, he informed the Commission that the Division had been developing synergies with GRID-Arendal (Global Research Information Database, Arendal, Norway) and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (International Cooperation and Controlling) of Germany.

49. The Director informed the Commission that the training manual for delineating the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles was now available in three languages (English, French and Spanish). He also stated that the first copies of the finalized manual were being delivered to the participants of the

first four training courses and that a CD-ROM version of the manual in all three languages would be available by the end of September 2006.

Item 13
Other matters

Technical issues of a general nature

50. The Commission decided to address several technical issues of a general nature. It also decided that those issues, for which neither the Convention nor the Scientific and Technical Guidelines provided any specific guidance, would be discussed in an informal open-ended working group with a view to identifying a consistent methodology and approaches that the subcommissions might refer to, as necessary. The working group met on six occasions under the chairmanship of Mr. Symonds in order to establish an informal list of such issues and commenced discussion of them.

Other meetings/conferences of interest

51. The members of the Commission exchanged information on meetings and conferences of interest taking place in the remainder of 2006.

Future sessions of the Commission

52. In order to continue the consideration of submissions by the subcommissions, the Commission decided to resume its eighteenth session from 13 to 17 November 2006 and from 22 January to 2 February 2007.

53. The Commission decided that, in the light of the current workload, the nineteenth session would be held from 5 March to 13 April 2007. The decision had been taken on the understanding that the technical examination of submissions would take place at the GIS laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division prior to and following the plenary meetings of the Commission, which would be held from 26 March to 5 April 2007. The Commission emphasized that it was aware that this represented, compared to the approved calendar of conferences, an additional four days of meetings for which full conference services would be required, thus resulting in programme budget implications for the draft resolution on oceans and the law of the sea to be adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. The meetings of the twentieth session would be held from 20 August to 7 September 2007 on the understanding that the technical examination of submissions would take place at the GIS laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division prior to and following the plenary meetings of the Commission, which would be held from 27 to 31 August 2007. The Director of the Division stated that the premises of the Division would be available, as necessary, for plenary sessions of the Commission without full interpretation. The Director also stated that the Commission needed to indicate its requirements for meetings and conference facilities in time for the preparation of the programme budget proposal for the biennium 2008-2009.

54. In that regard, the Commission indicated that in both 2008 and 2009 two sessions should be convened annually: the first in March-April, the second in August-September. Each session would involve two weeks of plenary meetings with

full conference services and four weeks of meetings of the subcommissions at the GIS laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division (that is, each session should be convened for a total of six weeks). In addition, up to three resumed sessions of two weeks each should be convened annually by the Commission in between the main sessions for subcommission work.

Matters relating to the support provided to the members of the Commission by the nominating States

55. In view of the forthcoming election of the members of the Commission, it was pointed out that the States making the nominations of new members might not be entirely aware of the financial implications of such nominations, as provided in article 2, paragraph 5, of annex II to the Convention, which states that the State Party which submitted the nomination of a member of the Commission shall defray the expenses of that member while in performance of Commission duties. Those States might not also be entirely aware of the fact that each member of a subcommission, in addition to his/her participation in the sessions of the Commission and, as applicable, in the meetings of the subcommissions, is required to undertake lengthy intersessional work on the analysis of the submissions and the preparation of recommendations, and that the nominating State needs to provide adequate support to the member of the Commission nominated by it during that period as well. The Commission therefore decided to draw the attention of States to that aspect, which would be more relevant with the increased workload of the Commission, for their consideration when making their nominations.

56. The Commission also endorsed a draft letter from the Chairman of the Commission addressed to the Permanent Representatives of States whose nationals were currently members of the Commission with a view to seeking their assistance in facilitating the work of the members concerned.

Trust fund

57. The Director of the Division reported on the status of the trust fund established by General Assembly resolution 55/7 for the purpose of defraying the cost of participation of the members of the Commission from developing States in the meetings of the Commission. As at 8 September 2006, the trust fund had assets of approximately $82,000, though that figure did not include the cost of the eighteenth session. A total of five members of the Commission had received assistance for that session, the total cost of which was estimated to amount to $34,500, including programme support costs. No new contributions had been received since the previous session of the Commission. The Director expressed his hope that the trust fund would receive additional contributions in the near future. The Commission expressed the view that the terms of reference of the trust fund should be amended at the earliest opportunity to cover assistance to members of the Commission from countries with economies in transition and also to cover attendance of the officers of the Commission from developing countries and countries with economies in transition at the Meeting of States Parties and other forums.

Closing remarks

58. The Commission noted, with sadness, the death on 23 August 2006 of Marie Tharp. Ms. Tharp, working first with Maurice Ewing and then with Bruce Heezen at

the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, was a geologist and gifted cartographer whose famous maps of the global seafloor were an important part of the revolution in earth sciences in the 1960s, now known as seafloor spreading and plate tectonics.

59. The Commission renewed its expression of appreciation to the staff of the Division, as well as to the interpreters, translators and other staff, for the assistance and services provided during its current session. The Commission also expressed its deep appreciation to Vladimir Golitsyn, Director of the Division, for his tireless and dedicated support to the Commission during his term of office and wished him the very best in his future endeavours.